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Intercultural education – a way to develop the "I" identity in the differentiated social world¹

In expert literature the term education is enormously capacious and in its broad sense it can mean "all different influences and methodical cultural forming of people"² or awakening, in the individual, the need of learning and feeling the world and its values³. Thus, the deep sense of contemporary education is expressed in the approved world of values of the individual who uses dialogue in social relations, the individual with intercultural views⁴. This orientation, understood as the care for commonwealth development of societies, in this context, acquires special features of intercultural education (frequently emphasized and described by numerous scientific environments⁵), which both in the past and currently has

¹ First published in: T. Lewowicki, E. Ogrodzka-Mazur (eds): *Z teorii i praktyki edukacji międzykulturowej /From the Theory and Practice of Intercultural Education/*. Cieszyn–Warszawa 2006, UŚ, WSP ZNP, pp. 249–260.

² Z. Łomny: *Człowiek i edukacja wobec przemian globalnych /Man and Education in the Face of Global Transformations/*. Radom 1996, ITE, p. 44.

³ I. Wojnar: *Światowa dekada rozwoju kulturalnego – nowe propozycje dla edukacji /The world decade of cultural development – new propositions for education/*. [in:] I. Wojnar, J. Kubin (eds): *Edukacja wobec wyzwań XXI wieku /Education in the Face of the 20th Century Challenges/*. Warszawa 1996, p. 25.

⁴ Z. Łomny: *Człowiek i edukacja wobec przemian globalnych /Man and Education in the Face of Global Transformations/*. op.cit., p. 272.

⁵ Reviewing the literature on this issue, the following can be recommended: K. J. Brozi: *Badanie zmian i relacji międzykulturowych w Europie i na jej pograniczach /Studies of Intercultural Changes and Relations in Europe and its Borderlands/*. Lublin 1997, UMCS; D. Markowska: *Teoretyczne podstawy edukacji międzykulturowej /Theoretical foundations of intercultural education/*. „Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny” 1990, No 4; J. Nikitorowicz: *Pogranicze – Tożsamość – Edukacja międzykulturowa /Borderland – Identity – Intercultural Education/*. Białystok 1995, „Trans Humana”; J. Nikitorowicz (ed.): *Edukacja międzykulturowa. W kręgu potrzeb, oczekiwań i stereotypów /Intercultural Education. Around Needs, Expectations and Stereotypes/*. Białystok 1995, „Trans Humana”; T. Lewowicki,

involved many contrasting meanings. Such education is perceived as “the pedagogy of contact or conflict of cultures”⁶. In both cases undeniable chances appear for noticing, getting acquainted with and wishing to understand Others, which altogether enables starting the process of mutual learning and reification of the surrounding social world.

Among numerous goals of intercultural education the following are often mentioned: the open attitude to the world and the new dimension of communication (not limited by race, language, tradition or social background), the involvement in the issues of peace, equality, respecting human rights and dignity of Others. Intercultural education, in the opinion of J. Nikitorowicz⁷, offers “the paradigm of coexistence” – it assumes the possibility of mutual development due to inner processes, dialogue, understanding, negotiation and cooperation. Intercultural education also exposes the need of “understanding tolerance”⁸, which pushes out the feeling of cultural superiority, forms of xenophobic behaviours and potential discrimination practices. The aim of this education is shaping (in social consciousness) the need for the dialogue of differences, indicating the ways and forms of communication, especially through mutual crossing one’s own borders (the borders of one’s own culture). This is done through getting into the Others’ sphere and comparing to them (searching for both differences and similarities) in order to enrich one’s own self and social and cultural identity⁹.

In the considerations concerning the relations between intercultural education and the processes of the individual’s personal development “I”, many threads appear which show the specificity of certain developmental contexts and the prin-

E. Ogrodzka-Mazur, A. Szczurek-Boruta (eds): *Edukacja międzykulturowa w Polsce i na świecie /Intercultural Education in Poland and Worldwide/*. Katowice 2000, UŚ; T. Lewowicki, E. Ogrodzka-Mazur (eds): *W poszukiwaniu teorii przydatnych w badaniach międzykulturowych /In Search for Theories Useful in Intercultural Studies/*. Cieszyn 2001, UŚ; T. Lewowicki, E. Ogrodzka-Mazur (eds): *Polityka społeczna i oświatowa a edukacja międzykulturowa /Social and Educational Policy and Intercultural Education/*. Cieszyn–Warszawa 2005, UŚ, WSP ZNP.

⁶ M. S. Szymański: *Od pedagogiki dla cudzoziemców do pedagogiki międzykulturowej w Republice Federalnej Niemiec, czyli modernizm i postmodernizm /From pedagogy for foreigners to intercultural pedagogy in the Federal Republic of Germany or modernism and post-modernism/*. [in:] J. Nikitorowicz (ed.): *Edukacja międzykulturowa. W kręgu potrzeb, oczekiwań i stereotypów /Intercultural Education. Around Needs, Expectations and Stereotypes/*. op.cit., p. 105.

⁷ J. Nikitorowicz: *Kreowanie tożsamości dziecka. Wyzwania edukacji międzykulturowej /Creating the Child’s Identity. The Challenges of Intercultural Education/*. Gdańsk 2005, GWP, p. 49.

⁸ Cf. e.g.: I. Lazari-Pawłowska: *Jeszcze o pojęciu tolerancji /Still more on the notion of tolerance/*. „Studia Filozoficzne” 1987, No 1.

⁹ J. Nikitorowicz: *Kreowanie tożsamości dziecka. Wyzwania edukacji międzykulturowej /Creating the Child’s Identity. The Challenges of Intercultural Education/*. op.cit., p. 49.

ciples that govern them. The analysis of selected theoretical-empirical approaches in this field aims at familiarization with these factors and mechanisms which determine and support the process of creating individuality and "I" identity of young people in the differentiated socio-cultural world.

The determinants of personal development of the individual

Individual development, especially developmental changes of the personal "I", always takes place in the interaction of individuals with their social environment. This environment creates a particular developmental context which facilitates the individual's activity and the organization of their personal experience. The experience is most frequently treated as an effect of the individual's activity in the environment, accumulated in functional structures of the organism, or in its more narrow sense, as a consolidated and coded in the brain portion of information which constitutes the basic material for man's mental development¹⁰. While analyzing classical theories in the field of cognitive¹¹ and cognitive-developmental¹² psychology, it is observable that the basic unit of individual experience is characterized by three aspects: cognitive, affective and evaluating. Elaborating an experience should refer to these three aspects and should comprise consecutively: – the symbolization in notional and symbolic categories which constitute the tools of cultural cognition; – emotional expression, i.e. emotional event of certain, either positive or negative, character and modality; – the approach in the categories of value, through the so called valuation of the individual's experience, shaped in the living conditions of the society and its culture. According to M. Tyszkowa¹³, experiences elaborated in the cognitive, emotional and evaluating aspects may become constituents of the originating functional structures of the individual, or

¹⁰ M. Tyszkowa: *Jednostka a rodzina: interakcje, stosunki, rozwój /The individual and family: interactions, relations, development/*. [in:] M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, M. Tyszkowa (eds): *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne /Psychology of Human Development. General Issues/*. Vol. 1. Warszawa 2000, PWN, pp. 126, 143.

¹¹ Due attention should be paid to the views of many authors representing the cognitive approach, such as, for example: W. Łukaszewski, J. Reykowski, K. Obuchowski; and also the contemporary Concept Self (inspired by W. James's views) and E. T. Higgins's theory of autoregulation.

¹² J. Piaget and L. Kohlberg are considered to be its major representatives.

¹³ M. Tyszkowa: *Jednostka a rodzina: interakcje, stosunki, rozwój /The individual and family: interactions, relations, development/*. [in:] M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, M. Tyszkowa (eds): *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne /Psychology of Human Development. General Issues/*. Vol. 1, op.cit.

in later periods, they may be built into these structures. Different and complex conditions, both family and environmental ones (social and cultural), occur in all fields of shaping and developing personality. Without any doubt, what is important is to be able to recognize the groups of determinants, to be able to model them and describe the scope of their influence.

Interactive socio-cultural environment – its role in mental, personality and behaviour development of the individual and in the development of identity

A basic determinant of the individual's mental development is their active involvement which comprises various factors of subjective, social and symbolic character (also communication acts) and personal interactions, so important in human life. A significant linking bridge between human active involvement in the environment and the changes occurring in the individual's mentality and social behaviour is constituted by the growing experience, which results from the processes of interpersonal communication in the field of socialization in different periods of the individual's life. Each period has its own specificity of the influence of stimuli and individual responses to them. The individual's active involvement in the social environment is an important source and a stimulant of appropriate development; it also enhances the life-long formation of the individual's personality. In various periods of ontogenesis, the development course is different and it depends on the nature of sources and mechanisms of developmental changes¹⁴. That is why: – mental activity and maturity of the individual develop in a specific way, – changes and transformations in personality structure (the centre of the subjective "I") take place, and – the individual's social competences¹⁵ towards act-

¹⁴ Broader discussion on developmental mechanisms is to be found in: A. Brzezińska: *Społeczna psychologia rozwoju /Social Psychology of Development/*. Warszawa 2000, „Scholar”, pp. 68–77; J. Trempała: *Modele rozwoju psychicznego. Czas i zmiana /Models of Mental Development. Time and Change/*. Bydgoszcz 2000, Akademia Bydgoska; A. Matczak: *Różnice indywidualne w rozwoju psychicznym /Individual differences in mental development/*. [in:] B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała (eds): *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Rozwój funkcji psychicznych /Psychology of Human Development. The Development of Mental Functions/*. Vol. 3. Warszawa 2002, PWN, pp. 178–183.

¹⁵ In numerous analyses, the attention is paid either to universal competences determining the right course of the socialization in consecutive life stages or to the competences useful in passing from one developmental stage to another. These are usually psychological dispositions responsible for a wide range of social activities. More: e.g. R. Stefańska-Klar: *Rozwój kompetencji społecznych*

ing increase with the gained experience. The most intensive development of these processes can be observed in childhood and adolescence¹⁶.

One's own active involvement and structural transformations of personality resulting from this activity are characterized in many psychological concepts, especially in phase models of development¹⁷. Due attention is paid to the fact that experiences acquired by children in their own involvement and subjective activities become the basic source of knowledge and the foundation for forming the opinions about reality and one's own person. The experiences involve the feeling of authenticity of emotional events. In the opinion of M. Tyszkowa, early culturally determined experiences (especially multi-sensory ones) play the role of prototypes in shaping perceptive processes which help to develop the "I" identity. The development of the child's personality – of cognitive, emotional and social individuality – initially occurs solely in the contacts with significant people. In this interaction field, what occurs is the recognition of stimuli which co-create the basic context for the formation of "I". The more complex and interactive the environment of life is, the more complete the development seems to be.

While indicating the developmental stages of the subjective "I", the concepts describing the development of the sense of "I" can be referred to through distinguishing oneself from the surroundings and through the process of consolidation of the feeling of inner coherence, the permanence of affective patterns and the continuity of "I"¹⁸. A significant function of the subjective "I" is the interpretation of experience, owing to which a system of personal meanings is created. Then, personality is shaped as a result of everlasting selecting, ordering, comparing and integration of experience. The basic motifs in the individual's own development are: aiming at strengthening oneself and aiming at contacts with Others in particular stages of life. It can be noticed that even a small child does not record

dziecka a proces socjalizacji /The development of social competences of the child and the socialization process/. [in:] E. Mandal, R. Stefańska-Klar (eds): *Współczesne problemy socjalizacji /Contemporary Problems of Socialization/*. Katowice 1995, UŚ, p. 76.

¹⁶ The issues of adolescence have been elaborated by many authors. Cf. e.g.: P. Szczukiewicz: *Rozwój psychospołeczny a tożsamość /Psycho-social Development and Identity/*. Lublin 1998, UMCS, pp. 49–53; J. Basistowa: *Istota i rozwój tożsamości w koncepcji E. H. Eriksona /The nature and development of identity in E. H. Erikson's concept/*. [in:] A. Galdowa (ed.): *Klasyczne i współczesne koncepcje osobowości /Classical and Modern Concepts of Personality/*. Kraków 1999, UJ, p. 119.

¹⁷ Cf. e.g.: A. Brzezińska: *Społeczna psychologia rozwoju /Social Psychology of Development/*. op.cit.; J. Trempała: *Modele rozwoju psychicznego. Czas i zmiana /Models of Mental Development. Time and Change/*. Bydgoszcz 2000, Akademia Bydgoska.

¹⁸ P. Oleś: *Rozwój osobowości /Personality development/*. [in:] B. Harwas-Napierała, J. Trempała (eds): *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Rozwój funkcji psychicznych /Psychology of Human Development. The Development of Mental Functions*. op.cit., p. 166.

experiences in a passive way but “out of them, creates a certain ordered, not necessarily logical, system of meanings”¹⁹. It is only in adolescence that changes in valuation can be observed as a result of autoreflective activity of the individual. The system of valuation changes adequately to the time-space perspective the individual applies, as well as it depends on the individual’s specific developmental context²⁰. Owing to the active function of subjective “I”, young people can specify their individual identities and can become active in interactions with Others. Due to growing experience and self-knowledge, they can establish new goals, (without any conflicts) overcome the developmental tasks imposed by the environment²¹, and – as K. Obuchowski indicates²² – they are capable of creative interpretation of their wishes and of generating their personal model of the world. As a result of one’s own activity and numerous social interactions, not only psycho-social alertness is developed, but also and mainly the feeling of identity is shaped. Then, personal (and social) identity is an important indicator of the third level of learning the personality²³.

Human identity, thus, is shaped under the influence of various individual experiences, usually taking place in concrete social contexts in different stages of development. In the course of social comparisons of “I” and Others²⁴, the picture

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 166.

²⁰ Differentiation and individuality of the contexts of human development originate from the overlapping interaction of the individual’s inner environment and the surrounding one in a particular period; they also depend on how this interaction is interpreted and felt.

²¹ The author of the concept of developmental (life) tasks is Havighurst. In his opinion, a developmental task is such a task which “appears in a certain life period and the fulfillment of which successfully leads to happiness and to success in future tasks; whereas, failure brings about the lack of happiness, social disapproval and difficulties in future tasks”. J. R. Havighurst: *Developmental tasks and education*. New York 1981, p. 2, quoted in: M. Tyszkowa: *Jednostka a rodzina: interakcje, stosunki, rozwój /The individual and family: interactions, relations, development/*. [in:] M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, M. Tyszkowa (eds): *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne /Psychology of Human Development. General Issues/*. op.cit., p. 138.

²² K. Obuchowski: *Adaptacja twórcza /Creative Adaptation/*. Warszawa 1985, Wyd. Wiedza i Książka, p. 168.

²³ M. Tyszkowa: *Jednostka a rodzina: interakcje, stosunki, rozwój /The individual and family: interactions, relations, development/*. [in:] M. Przetacznik-Gierowska, M. Tyszkowa (eds): *Psychologia rozwoju człowieka. Zagadnienia ogólne /Psychology of Human Development. General Issues/*. op.cit., pp. 127–128.

²⁴ “Others” is the individual’s own reference group. It is regarded that for individual identity finding differences between the individual and Others (the reference group) seems more valuable, whereas similarities are more important for social identity. Cf. e.g.: J.-P. Codol: *Porównywanie „ja – inni” a normy społeczne: zjawisko P.I.P. /“I – Others” comparing and social norms: P.I.P. phenomenon/*. „Studia Psychologiczne” 1977, pp. 5–26.

of personal identity is crystallized, whereas the features which constitute similarities between "I" and the group (Others) become components and determinants of social identity²⁵.

While considering identity, it seems crucially important to use such a model of developmental phase changes which presents regularities in overcoming developmental barriers in the field of various mental and cognitive-emotional functions, social adjustment and learning. Here, the role of the child's early experience acquired and shaped in life environment, especially in family environment, is emphasized. These approaches aim at illustrating the direction of developmental changes and the mechanisms leading to the individual's better familiarization with social and cultural life. Together with the intensity of acquiring these experiences, the individual develops perceptive ability which, in the conditions of differentiated social reality, enables better controlled and more purposeful usage of new cognitive categories. What develop dynamically over the time and through subjective relations – from childhood to achieving personal maturity – are: the level of individual competences (readiness to act), the unique system "I" – the concept of oneself (situating oneself in the field of social interactions), and the so called sense of the condition of "I" (the feeling of inner cohesion and separateness)²⁶. On this way of subjective relations, many personality modelling factors are faced, as well as factors which shape certain social and cultural behaviours. In this approach, identity development is subordinate to the process of "becoming"²⁷ in the life cycle.

The concept mentioned above is not a collage of self-knowledge and evaluations which are simple reflections of different social experiences, but most probably, it is "a complex and changeable entity with many faces, dynamically chang-

²⁵ M. Jarymowicz, A. Kwiatkowska: *Atrybuty własnej tożsamości: właściwości spostrzegane jako wspólne dla Ja i Innych versus specyficznie własne /Attributes of one's own identity: properties perceived as common to I and Others versus specifically own properties/*. [in:] M. Jarymowicz (ed.): *Studia nad spostrzeganiem relacji Ja – Inni: tożsamość, indywidualizacja – przynależność /Studies on the Perception of I – Others Relation: Identity, Individualization – Belonging/*. Wrocław 1988, „Ossolineum”.

²⁶ Such an approach is suggested by L. Witkowski: *Tożsamość i zmiana (wstęp do epistemologicznej analizy kontekstów edukacyjnych) /Identity and Change (Introduction to the Epistemologic Analysis of Educational Contexts/*. Toruń 1988, UMK, pp. 113–120.

²⁷ Broader discussion on these issues in the author's text: J. Suchodolska: *Rozwój psychospołeczny a tożsamość dziecka w warunkach zróżnicowania kulturowego na Pograniczu /Psycho-social development and the child's identity in the conditions of cultural differentiation of borderlands/*. [in:] T. Lewowicki, A. Szczurek-Boruta, B. Grabowska (eds): *Przemiany społeczno-cywilizacyjne i edukacja szkolna – problemy rozwoju indywidualnego i kształtowania się tożsamości /Social and Civilization Transformations and School Education – Problems of Individual Development and Identity Shaping/*. Cieszyń–Warszawa–Kraków 2005, „Impuls”, pp. 321–332.

ing in consecutive situations”²⁸, which is equal to autonarration. The multitude of aspects, changeability, and the processes of reflective and autoreflective concentration on the relations between the individual’s subjective “I” and the environment, allow to state that the concept of oneself is constructed and reconstructed many times in the life cycle²⁹. Undeniably, the reconstructions are made under the influence of both new experiences of individuals and new forms of their activity. They are intrinsically connected with certain reporting (interactive) contexts and developmental tasks in different life stages. The reconstructions occur till the moment when psycho-emotional and social readiness for conscious contact with social surroundings increase, and the ability to reinterpret values and meanings established by life environment is shaped.

While analyzing selected theoretical aspects of the undertaken issues, it can be observed that a very special period for the development of these social competences is adolescence. This is mainly due to the fact that youth at this developmental stage tries, in a conscious way, to give certain sense to their life and create their own, unique autodeinition. This takes place in a particular developmental context and in particular interactive areas.

Intercultural education and the cultural world of the “I” identity of contemporary youth

The relation between the individual’s creative participation in the variety of the world and in forming one’s own autodescription – autonarration, biography, life-line³⁰ – can be outlined in many ways. One of them seems to be indicating and implementing the idea of intercultural education, understood as conscious visiting the border area of the “Other” in order to search for the value of difference. To fulfill the idea, it is important to apply distance to oneself and one’s own culture in order to open for the culture of the Other with a fundamental belief in benefits of such communication³¹ which enables cultural enriching. Intercultural

²⁸ P. K. Oleś: *Wprowadzenie do psychologii osobowości /An Introduction to the Psychology of Personality/*. Warszawa 2003, „Scholar”, p. 262.

²⁹ These issues are also undertaken in: K. Obuchowski: *Człowiek intencjonalny, czyli o tym, jak być sobą /Intentional Man or How to Be Oneself/*. Poznań 2000, „Rebis”.

³⁰ The terms are used in expert literature interchangeably and they aim at reflecting the specificity of the individual’s subjective participation in constructing the direction of the individual’s personal development – the own and unique “I”.

³¹ More on that issue in: J. Mikołowski Pomorski: *Komunikacja międzykulturowa. Wpro-*

education, understood in this way, does not focus on normalization (ignoring the differences, or the so called silence training), but on the acceptance and shaping of communication competences of the man and the ability to lead one's own life³². The basis of dialogue communication, understood in such a way, is the individual's acquisition of the ability to notice and understand cultural differences, the willingness to negotiate and the "opening of one's own identity" to new constituent elements. The previously mentioned negotiation and communication activities are an attempt to reconstruct the common world. The individual's involvement undertaken to achieve this aim enables the development of individual experiences and leads to re-interpretation of the concept of "I" and reconstruction of identity. In J. Schmidt's opinion³³, the shape of this communication depends on the co-existence of three components: the feedback in relations with the environment, the agreement concerning meanings and the empathic application of the role of the receiver. Communication in such a sense becomes the perspective of sender-receiver behaviours, it is "a means (process) of integration and development (in the individual and group dimension) of one's own image with a view of creating, maintaining and/or opposing to socio-cultural relations"³⁴.

Young people notice many stages of shaping individual identity. All developmental stages and specific environmental and socialization influences attributed to them (areas significant for the structure of "I") are associated with a certain symbolic communication context which is important for developing the feeling of "I". Specifying the line of their life and development, youth focus mainly on models indicating phase growth of competences and abilities (on approaches to events, situations, influences of people and environments significant in their life), which contribute to finding an answer to the question: "Who am I, here and now; who I am in the constantly changing social space"?

wadzenie /Intercultural Communication. An Introduction/. Kraków 1999, Wyd. AE; A. Kapciak: *Komunikacja międzykulturowa jako fenomen kultury współczesnej /Intercultural communication as a phenomenon of modern culture/*. [in:] A. Kapciak, L. Korporowicz, A. Tyszka (eds): *Komunikacja międzykulturowa. Zbliżenia i impresje /Intercultural Communication. Insights and Impressions/*. Warszawa 1995, Instytut Kultury.

³² These assumptions formed also the foundations of radical education. Cf.: Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski (eds): *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki /Pedagogy. A Coursebook for Students/*. Warszawa 2004, PWN, p. 371.

³³ J. Schmidt: *Dialog w edukacji międzykulturowej /Dialogue in intercultural education/*. „Edukacja i dialog” 2004, No 8, pp. 43–44.

³⁴ R. A. Dul: *Komunikacja niewerbalna w teorii i badaniach /Non-verbal communication in theory and research/*. [in:] A. Kapciak, L. Korporowicz, A. Tyszka (eds): *Komunikacja międzykulturowa. Zbliżenia i impresje /Intercultural Communication. Insights and Impressions/*. op.cit., p. 44.

The analysis of the examined people's responses³⁵ allows to notice that the most important environment shaping the first images of oneself and deciding about relations with Others is for all respondents the family. Dialogue communication in understanding and accepting family environment facilitates the child's independence in starting first social, interpersonal contacts and first acquaintances. These are important situation-task contexts, in which (as a result of social reflecting) the image of oneself is shaped and the first autodefinition of "I" is built. This is an environment which in the most natural way, through particular patterns of social behaviour, prepares for meeting Others, for understanding and building communication with the world. In this way, important aims associated with "education towards cognition, understanding and social being" are fulfilled. The selected aspects and assumptions of intercultural education which are implemented in family and which enhance the child's individual development should concentrate (and in many cases do) on fulfilling the aim "to teach without borders". This is family that should see the aim and should fulfill it in accordance with the belief in the necessity of overcoming developmental (cognitive, emotional and social) and communication barriers, as well as the barriers in perception and differentiation of the stimuli of individual development. The motto "to teach without borders" obligates the family and other environments of significant people to certain activities in this area. In the examined youth's opinion, such activities have been and many times are undertaken by their families with deep involvement (especially of older generations in the family – grandparents). One of the goals of such education is the family's concern about the progress of abilities, talents and social behaviours which develop communication alertness and enhance an independent start into adolescence and future adult life. According to the inquired students, what is important for creating the identity of the child is the cross-generation transmission³⁶. It creates the behavioural culture of family, provides individual and social experience shaping the personalities of family members and enhancing the formation of their

³⁵ These responses were collected owing to autodescriptions prepared by third year students of pedagogy from the University of Silesia in Cieszyn. This was a requirement within an optional subject in the field of multi- and intercultural education, in which students could use the theoretical concepts (suggested by expert literature) referring to the models of developmental changes which highlight also the regularities of the development of "I" identity.

³⁶ Broader discussion of this issue in: A. Szyfer: *Mędzygeneracyjna transmisja dziedzictwa kulturowego rodzinie i społeczności* /Cross-generation transmission of cultural heritage to family and society/. [in:] J. Nikitorowicz, J. Halicki, J. Muszyńska (eds): *Mędzygeneracyjna transmisja dziedzictwa międzykulturowego. Społeczno-kulturowe wymiary przekazu* /Cross-generation Transmission of Intercultural Heritage. Socio-cultural Dimensions of Transmission/. Białystok 2003, „Trans Humana”, pp. 19–25.

individual culture in contacts with unlikeness. The students often indicate such people in their life and they are of the opinion that family environment also implements such moral principles and values as "preparing children for life in peace with no aggression and hate towards Others". The youth also point at the implemented fundamental Christian principle "love instead of violence"³⁷. It is worth attention here that a significant factor (environment) creating the feeling of identity (uniqueness, individuality of "I") is the widely understood Christian environment and the contact with people who identify with Christianity and create Christian culture, especially the youth participating in "the oasis" movement. The family should start to fulfill the aims of "education towards tolerance, cooperation and social communication" as early as possible. A close contact of cultures, to which the young grow up, requires not only the knowledge (shaped in cultural time and space) about Others, but most of all, it requires shaping empathic attitudes to another man. Only if no danger of differentiation occurs, accepting tolerance, readiness for social communication and authentic willingness to cooperate can grow. Fulfilling this idea is indispensable so that the overlapping layers surrounding the identity of contemporary generations could develop without conflicts.

Beyond any doubt, it can be observed that family is the most important socialization link of the individual. This is family which creates the world of individual experiences not only in early childhood, but it also becomes a significant link of harmonious development of the young person till early adulthood. In the consciousness of the examined students, this picture is relatively coherent. This is a microworld in which the first ideas of oneself, of Others, and of relations with them, are developed. Here, some social competences develop in the field of cognitive treatment of individual experience, decoding of meaning, understanding norms, the interpretation of values and social patterns, and in the field of acquiring the culture of society. Synthesizing young people's responses on culture-generating role of family which fulfills the goals of individual development, it can be noticed that – in the respondents' opinion – this is family which creates its own system of interpersonal communication and has its own rich individual life. In family home, the child is provided with past family and regional experiences, the traditions of previous generations, inrooted in habits, customs, cultural behaviours. They are all subjected to evaluation. Customs and rites are an important component of family culture. If they are transmitted and cherished, they become deeply inrooted in cultural heritage of the family.

³⁷ This is a quotation from the work of a third-year student of pedagogy at the University of Silesia.

What seems significant in creating family identity³⁸ of the young person is to secure the continuation of cultural heritage and regulation in the field of cultural diffusion³⁹ in which the young take part and of which they are receivers. This takes place also due to the feeling of being inrooted in family commonwealth and due to the identification with this environment. Such inrooting, according to students, protects from getting lost in an anonymous community and leads to fulfilling the orientation towards one's own self⁴⁰. Students perceive the role of family environment as crucially significant, both in early and later stages of creating the identity. The regularities in this field of influence consist in interactions which develop in early phases of the child's development in family environment.

Another very important reference group is the social peer group, fulfilling goals which are common for this population and which concern choosing the way of life. Significant markers of social behaviours in adolescence are: searching for the right life idea, attempts to fulfill one's own (and the whole generation's) expectations concerning the immediate future, and the feeling of the group's social condition (which is an empirical indicator of the developing condition of subjective "I"). Thus, bonds between young people, the bonds which indicate the feeling of "I" in the social life of interaction, are an important stimulant of individual development in this period. The "I" identity (the concept of oneself and the feeling of psycho-social condition) develops in this life stage as an effect of the individual's fulfilled possibilities in the field of managing in contacts and communication with Others and in the surrounding and changing socio-cultural reality. Young people participate in many social undertakings which unite and consolidate them inside. These are various forms of involvement aiming at the good of other people who need support and help, the participation in programmes of social support and voluntary service. Communication with such people, in the students' opinions, gives them the feeling of self-achievement, of the influence on the Others' vicissitudes and improvement of the conditions of their development. This kind of mutual communication becomes as if visiting the border areas of unlikeness and getting acquainted with "Others". It not only contributes to the development of many

³⁸ Broader discussion on family identity in: J. Nikitorowicz: *Kreowanie tożsamości dziecka. Wyzwania edukacji międzykulturowej / Creating the Child's Identity. The Challenges of Intercultural Education/*. op.cit.

³⁹ L. Dyczewski: *Rodzina twórcą i przekazicielem kultury / Family – the Creator and Transmitter of Culture/*. Lublin 2003, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.

⁴⁰ H. Synowiec: *Dialog i współdziałanie w rodzinach śląskich jako forma przekazu kultury regionalnej / Dialogue and cooperation in Silesian families as a form of regional culture transmission/*. [in:] B. Dymara (ed.): *Dziecko w świecie współdziałania / The Child in the World of Cooperation/*. Kraków 2001, „Impuls”, pp. 43–44.

individual and social competences, but it mainly develops the ability to integrate different fields (constitutive elements) of the individual's identity. In this way, one's individual and social (also cultural) needs can be fulfilled, at the same time aiming at creative self-acceptance and the development of subjective identity. It can be thought that, regardless the applied model of the individual's identity and the kind of mechanisms bringing about changes of "I" structure, the indicated by the respondents socialization environments may be recognized as significant factors constituting the concept of "I" of contemporary youth entering adulthood. Forming the feeling of identity in the aspect of self-consciousness of the individual⁴¹ is a subject of constant autoreflection. It is largely exemplified in autodefinitions performed by this socio-cultural group, for whom undertaking the contact with the Other and following the rules of broadly understood intercultural education is a daring challenge in life.

⁴¹ Cf.: J. Nikitorowicz: *Kreowanie tożsamości dziecka. Wyzwania edukacji międzykulturowej międzykulturowej /Creating the Child's Identity. The Challenges of Intercultural Education/*. op.cit.